

# MODULE 3

## Clinical Recognition and Management

PPE Selection, START Triage, and Decontamination Protocols

### **Bioterrorism Preparedness for Nevada Nurses**

4.0 Contact Hours | Nevada Board of Nursing Approved

Provider: NV-14175 | NAC 632.340 & NAC 632.355

## Learning Objectives

1	Recognize syndromic patterns suggesting biological agent exposure
2	Select appropriate PPE based on suspected agent and transmission route
3	Apply the START triage algorithm in mass casualty situations
4	Implement decontamination protocols for chemical and radiological contamination

## Syndromic Recognition

Most Category A agents initially present with influenza-like illness (ILI):

Syndrome	Suspect Agents	Red Flags
Febrile Respiratory	Anthrax, Plague, Tularemia	Rapid progression, widened mediastinum
Vesicular Rash	Smallpox	Centrifugal distribution, same stage
Hemorrhagic Fever	VHFs (Ebola, Marburg)	Bleeding from multiple sites, shock
Flaccid Paralysis	Botulism	Descending paralysis, alert patient
GI Syndrome	Anthrax (GI), Ricin	Bloody diarrhea, severe pain

## PPE Selection Guide

Precaution Level	Components	Use For
Standard	Gloves, hand hygiene	Anthrax, Botulism, Tularemia
Droplet	Standard + surgical mask within 6 ft	Pneumonic Plague
Airborne	N95/PAPR + negative pressure room	Smallpox
Enhanced Barrier	Fluid-impermeable suit, double gloves, PAPR	Ebola, Marburg (VHFs)

### ■ CRITICAL WARNING

Standard hospital PPE is INADEQUATE for chemical nerve agents! Contaminated patients must be decontaminated BEFORE entering the ED.

## START Triage Algorithm

Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment (START) allows rapid categorization in under 60 seconds:

Category	Color	Criteria	Priority
Immediate	RED	Life-threatening but survivable with immediate care	Highest
Delayed	YELLOW	Serious but can wait 4-6 hours	Second
Minor	GREEN	Walking wounded, minor injuries	Third
Expectant	BLACK	Deceased or unsurvivable injuries	Lowest

**START Steps:** 1) Can walk? → GREEN. 2) Breathing? No → BLACK. >30/min → RED. 3) Cap refill >2 sec? → RED. 4) Follows commands? No → RED. Yes → YELLOW

## Decontamination Protocols

### Key Principle

Removing clothing eliminates 80-90% of external contamination.

Type	Priority	Method
Chemical	CRITICAL - life-saving	Hot Zone decontamination, copious water, control runoff
Radiological	Important	Remove clothing, survey with Geiger counter, wash with soap

- ✓ Most bioterrorism agents present initially with flu-like symptoms
- ✓ PPE selection depends on transmission route of the suspected agent
- ✓ START triage: Immediate (Red), Delayed (Yellow), Minor (Green), Expectant (Black)
- ✓ Removing clothing eliminates 80-90% of external contamination